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AP

FANS BANNED AT OLY; TOKYO UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY

Fans were banned from the Tokyo Olympics which will open in two weeks, following a state of emergency announced on Thursday, Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa told news agency Kyodo. The ban was announced by the International Olympic Committee and Japanese organisers, reducing the games to a made-for-TV event, amidst concerns of rising Covid infections. | P15

₹23K cr package to tackle third wave

First Cabinet meet seeks to learn from past errors, aims to create better public health infra

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

HAVING burnt its fingers because of sluggish response during the initial stages of the Covid second wave, the first meeting of the recast Cabinet presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday sought to quickly address challenges from the anticipated third wave by rustling up a ₹23,123 crore healthcare package.

The package aims to create paediatric units in all 736 districts because of the apprehension that the third wave could affect children. The Centre also intends to build synergy with state governments while implementing the package as against the policy of passing the buck to states during the second wave.

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the Centre and states will work as a team to implement the package between July and March, for which consultations will be held with each state government on ways to strengthen their medical infrastructure. The nine-month span is the upper limit for executing the plan, he assured. Mandaviya stressed that the government will expedite work on addressing critical issues based on the lessons learnt from the second wave.

The ₹23,123 crore package is a follow up to the ₹15,000 crore package provided by the Centre last year to deal with the first wave of the pandemic. Making it clear that the government does not want to take any chances with the third wave, Mandaviya said the spread and sweep of the package will include creation of field hospitals with 5,000 bed capacities, ICU and oxygen beds, buffer stock of critical medicines worth ₹1 crore in each district and setting up 10,000 litre oxygen plants.

Also, the Centre will work with states for uniformity in the manner in which trained human resources like resident doctors, interns, final-year MBBS students and paramedics are roped in for emergency services for a fixed duration with standardised compensation.

The plan includes augmenting 20,000 ICU beds in the public healthcare system, out of which 20% will be reserved for children. For rural, peri-urban and tribal areas, "creating prefabricated structures for adding additional beds at the existing CHCs, PHCs and SHCs (6-20 bedded units) and support would also be provided to establish bigger field hospitals (50-100 bedded units) depending on the needs at tier-II or Tier-III cities and district HQs" will be part of the package.

OUTREACH TO RESTIVE FARMERS

The Union Cabinet also sought to address concerns of the agitating farmers by allowing inclusion of the Agriculture Produce Marketing Cooperatives (mandis) in the ₹1 lakh crore interest subvention scheme unveiled in the Union Budget for creation of agriculture infrastructure | P9

EXPRESS READ

Relief for BSY as court dismisses graft plaint

Bengaluru: Citing absence of valid sanction, a city court on Thursday dismissed a private complaint for probe into corruption allegations against CM BS Yediyurappa, his son, relatives and a minister, relating to a residential project. P4

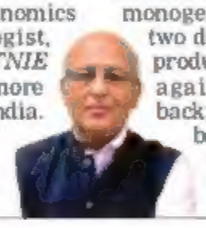
OIC seeks to send delegation to J&K

New Delhi: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has evinced interest to dispatch a delegation to Jammu and Kashmir, during a meeting with Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ausaf Sayeed in Jeddah recently. P10

Vax, booster should be different: Expert

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

WHILE the jury is still out on how long antibodies produced after vaccination will remain in the body, several countries are talking of booster doses to beat the highly transmissible, emerging variants of SARS-COV-2, like the Delta variant. However, former head of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG) and virologist, **Dr Shahid Jameel**, told *TNIE* that there is a need for more studies on this front in India. He said booster doses of the same adenovirus vaccines may not be a good idea and that the country should either try a new combination of vaccines as booster doses, or wait for more studies.



According to Dr Jameel, "From a virological and immunological point of view, it may not be a good idea to give a booster dose of an adenovirus vaccine. The reason simply is that adenoviruses are very highly immonogenic and our body, after two doses, will have already produced a lot of antibodies against the adenovirus background. Hence, a third booster dose of the same vaccine is not likely to be very effective." P3

NATIONWIDE	JULY 7	JULY 8
Fresh cases	43,733	45,892
Recoveries	47,240	44,291
Deaths	930	817

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

July 7: 31,84,428 doses

July 8: 36,08,940 doses

TOTAL DOSES: 38,83,70,352

THERE WERE 4.6 LAKH ACTIVE CASES IN INDIA ON THURSDAY

KARNATAKA	JULY 7	JULY 8
Fresh cases	2,743	2,530
Recoveries	3,081	3,344
Deaths	75	62

BIG TECH TROUBLE

GOVT FREE TO GO AFTER TWITTER: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Delhi High Court on Thursday said the Centre was free to initiate action against Twitter in accordance with the IT rules in case it had breached them. Parallelly, new Union information technology minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the law of the land is supreme, adding those who live and work in India have to abide by the country's rules.

Justice Rekha Palli granted two weeks to Twitter to file hard copies of the notarised affidavit of a competent officer on compliance with the new rules.

"It is made clear that since this court has only granted time to Twitter to file its affidavits to show compliance of the rules and there is no interim protection granted, it will be open for the Union of India to take action against Twitter in accordance with rules in case of any breach of the rules," the court said, while slating the case for next hearing on July 28.

For its part, Twitter said it was not seeking any protection. The microblogging site said it has appointed a resident of India as its interim Chief Compliance Officer effective July 6. Regarding the Nodal Contact Officer, it will try to fill the position on an interim basis in two weeks. And the process of hiring an interim Resident Grievance Officer is expected to over be by July 11, it informed. While the appointments are interim, it would not lessen the responsibilities imposed on those officers to ensure compliance with the new IT Rules, Twitter assured. Twitter also told the court that its first compliance report covering the period of May 26 to June 25 will be filed by July 11. P9

TWITTER MD QUESTIONS UP POLICE NOTICE: P5

FB CAN'T SKIP DELHI RIOTS PANEL: SC

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

STRESSING that social media platforms should show accountability towards its users, the Supreme Court on Thursday said the Delhi Assembly can seek information from Facebook and its officials in connection with their alleged role in the 2020 Delhi Riots. However, the Assembly's Peace and Harmony committee would have no jurisdiction over issues like law and order of Delhi, which comes under the Central government.

"Because of the nature of the riots, the Assembly without transgressing into any field of the Union under 7th Schedule can look into the issue," a three-judge bench of the court said.

Hearing a plea by Facebook India against the summons issued by the committee to its head Ajit Mohan, the bench, while calling it premature, stated he must appear before the committee, but his representative can choose not to answer questions outside of the Assembly's domain.

The bench said social media platforms like Facebook have the power and potential to influence people across borders, and debates and posts on them have the potential to polarise the society as most people do not have the wherewithal to verify the content.

"The capital can ill-afford any repetition of the occurrence, and thus, the role of Facebook in this context must be looked into by the powers that be. It is in this background that the Assembly sought to constitute a Peace and Harmony committee. It cannot be said that its concerns were misconceived or illegitimate," the court said in its 188-page judgment. P9

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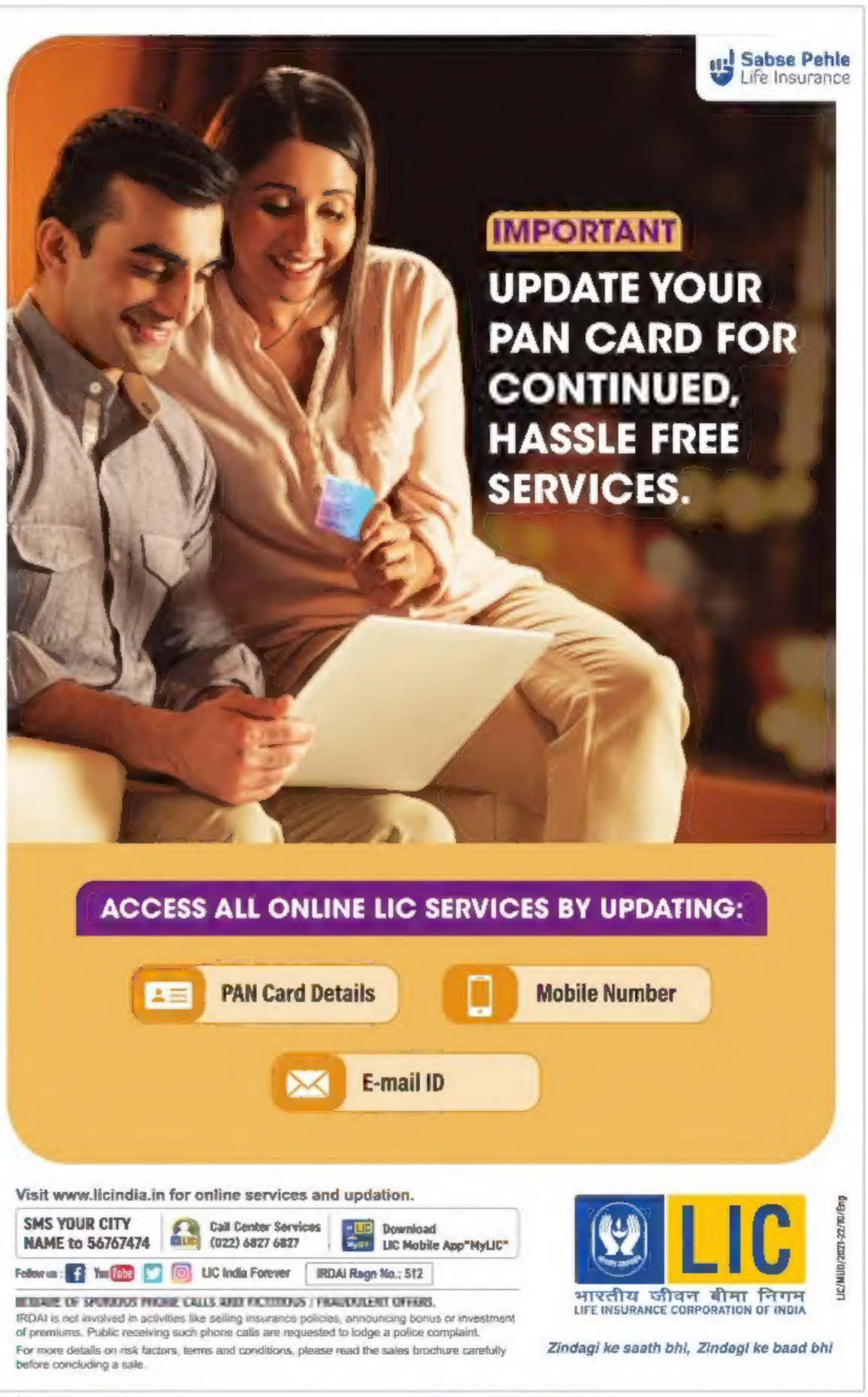
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